

REMARKS

These remarks are in reply to the Office Action mailed September 13, 2005 in the above-identified patent application.

Summary of the Amendment

Upon entry of the amendment, Claims 1, 5, and 7-12, will have been amended. Therefore, Claims 1-12 currently remain pending.

Further, Applicant has made changes to the Specification and to the Drawings.

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 1-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. However, the Examiner stated that Claims 1-12 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Traversal of Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, First Paragraph

Applicant traverses the rejection of Claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite.

A. Amendment of Claim 1

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claim 1, stating that the use of the word “preferably” in Claim 1 made Claim 1 indefinite in that it was not clear what scope is claimed.

In response to the Examiner’s rejection, the Applicant has deleted “preferably” in amended Claim 1. Applicant therefore submits that such rejection is now overcome and that Claim 1 is now in condition for allowance.

B. Amendments to Claims 5, 6, 11 and 12

Applicant traverses the rejection of Claims 5, 6, 11, and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. In the Office Action, the Examiner stated that there was “a lack of antecedent in the specification and the drawing for the claimed feature.”

Applicant respectfully submits that as amended, the Specification now provides proper antecedent support for the subject matter found in Claims 5, 6, 11, and 12. Applicant has also amended Claims 5, 11, and 12 in order to provide more appropriate terminology in the claims. Therefore, Applicant believes that the basis for rejection has been overcome and that Claims 5, 6, 11, and 12 are now in condition for allowance.

C. **Amendments to Claims 7-12**

Applicant traverses the rejection of Claims 7-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. In the Office Action, the Examiner stated that "Claims 7-12 are improper apparatus dependent claim depending from a method claim since they can be infringed without infringing the base claim from which they depend." Additionally, with regard to Claim 7 in particular, the Examiner indicated that "it is not clear what different between 'means for controlling and regulating the position of additional rolls placed above the strip in said roll conveyor' and 'means for controlling the temperature downstream of said loop.'"

Applicant respectfully submits that as amended, Claims 7-12 have been amended and are now directed to an apparatus. Further, independent Claim 7 has been amended to clarify the difference between the "means" language noted by the Examiner. As amended, Claim 7 recites, *inter alia*, **means for controlling and regulating the position of additional rolls** placed above the strip in said roll conveyor, between a position detached from the strip and a position in contact with the strip itself, **and further for controlling** the temperature at positions downstream of said loop. Therefore, Applicant believes that the basis for rejection has been overcome and that Claims 7-12 are now in condition for allowance.

D. **Amendment to Claim 10**

Applicant traverses the rejection of Claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. In the Office Action, the Examiner stated that "the meaning of 'reciprocal distance'" was not clear in Claim 10.

In response to the Examiner's rejection, Applicant has amended Claim 10 to recite, *inter alia*, **means for the variation of distance** between the descending and ascending sections of the

strip which forms the loop. Therefore, Applicant believes that the basis for rejection has been overcome and that Claim 10 is now in condition for allowance.

Amendments to the Specification

As indicated above, Applicant has added two new paragraphs to the Specification in order to provide antecedent support in the Detailed Description for the subject matter encompassed in originally filed Claims 5, 11, and 12. In particular, Applicant has simply added the subject matter of original Claims 5, 11, and 12 to the Specification, along with reference numeral "30" for the "well," which is now illustrated in Figure 2. Applicant submits that such amendment of the Specification does not add new matter. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner enter such amendment.

Amendments to the Drawings

As mentioned above, Applicant has provided replacement drawings for Figures 1 and 2. Replacement Figure 1 is a finalized version of original Figure 1, and has not been altered. Replacement Figure 2 has been amended to illustrate the "well" disclosed in the claims, and which is referred to with reference numeral "30."

Applicant submits that these replacement drawings do not add new matter to the application and therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner indicate acceptance of the replacement drawings.

Application is Allowable

Applicant respectfully submits that each and every pending claim of the present invention meets the requirements for patentability under 35 U.S.C. § 112, and respectfully requests the Examiner to indicate allowance of each and every pending claim of the present invention.

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Attorney Docket: NOTAR-016US

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests allowance of the above-identified application. Should the Examiner have any questions or suggestions for expediting the allowance of the applicant, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the number listed below.

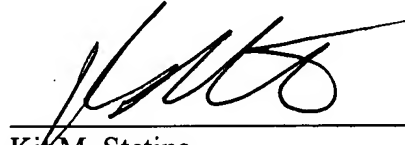
If any additional fee is required, please charge Deposit Account Number 19-4330.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: December 8, 2005

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APPENDIX A

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Applicant submits replacement drawings for original Figures 1 and 2, attached hereto in Appendix A. Applicant notes that replacement Figure 1 is a finalized version of original Figure 1, and has not been altered. Replacement Figure 2 illustrates the “well” disclosed in the claims, and which is referred to with reference numeral “30.”

Applicant submits that these replacement drawings do not add new matter to the application and therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner indicate acceptance of the replacement drawings.